The Portfolio Connection

Newsletter

May, 1992 Issue No. 2

Also in this issue:
More new files &
Security Measures - Page 2
File encryption &
the SPaint review - Page 3
The PBasic Column
& Games Corner - Page 4

Growing and Changing !

Welcome to this our second newsletter. We would like to thank all of you who wrote in to say how much you enjoyed the first newsletter and to wish us success with the venture.

We would also like to say 'hello' to those of you reading the newsletter for the first time. We hope it will increase your use and enjoyment of your Atari Portfolio or DIP Pocket PC.

This issue sees a big increase in the sets available (including some for ST users), a major reorganisation of the catalogue and even new colour paper for the newsletter - we hope you like it!

Inside you will find information on securing your Portfolio, file encryption , a review of the drawing program, SPaint, an introduction to PBasic in the PBasic column and the Games Corner. Have fun!

Top Ten Sets

1. GAMES
2. WORDPROCESSING
3. PBASIC 1
4. UTILITIES 1
5. PC ACCESSORIES 1
6. GRAPHICS 3
7. UTILITIES 2
8. APPLICATIONS 1
9. GRAPHICS 1
10. APPLICATIONS 2

New This Month:

Catalogue Reorganisation

There have been huge increases in the number of files and programs available and we are pleased to be able to offer you over **650** different files and programs. We have added TEN NEW SETS to the catalogue! These include Applications, Wordprocessing, Graphics, Games, Programming and ST Accessories (see below). The catalogue has been reorganised to make it easier to find what you want and the sets have been renumbered to make it easier to add new sets to the catalogue.

New Sets

Check them out in your catalogue for fuller details.

Applications 3

Includes amongst others:

- **Stock.wks** - worksheet for stocks and shares
- **Recacc.wks** - worksheet for tracking finances
- **Lister** - make and view multiple lists
- **Emma** - send messages by MCI mail
- **PFBoot** - transfer Xterm to your memory card via the serial Port
- **Psychlit & Medline** - two address files to facilitate adding references to a bibliographic database

Wordprocessing 2

Includes:

- **VDE** - a wordstar-like text editor which works on the Portfolio
- **QHelp** - add extensive help screens to QEdit, the Pbasic editor and the Powerbasic editor
- **STDCode** - two small PRead files containing the national dialling codes. Search by name or number.
- **Londoncd** - as stdcode but for London codes
- **Intlcode** - international codes.

Graphics 4

Includes:

- **SPaint Fonts** - ten new fonts for SPaint, and a pgc file of clipart
- **Animations** - six new animations
- **Graphics** - 49 pgc graphic files
- **Viewport** - impressive Portfolio graphic viewer for your PC. View pgf, pgc, pgx and com file animations. Slide show facility - 10 pictures at once!

Games 2

Includes:

- **Adven** - a huge PD text adventure
- **Card Games** - Cribbage and Palmtop Poker
- **Pgcpzl** - sliding block puzzle using pgc graphics
- **Sound Utilities** - speech from your Port!!

Programming Sets

Four new sets:

- **Asic** - basic compiler which works on the Port. (Following a recommendation from one of our customers)
- **Languages 1** - includes Portfolio Turbo Pascal Unit, Lisp for the Portfolio, Bob - a small object orientated programming language and a C library for Portfolio graphics.
- **Small C Interpreter** - this C language interpreter should work on the Portfolio
- **Uniforth** - a version of Forth which should work on the Port + Pgc and Pgx graphic specifications

ST Accessories

Two new sets:

- **ST/Portfolio Transfer** - all the programs you need to transfer files between the Portfolio and the ST using the serial peripheral. Needs a special cable which we can provide - see catalogue for more details.
- **ST Accessories** - includes mainly graphic programs for your ST to create and convert to Portfolio graphics. Eg Pgcgrab extracts pgc graphics from Degas images. Disppgc allows you to view pgc files on the ST etc. etc.

New Additions

These are the new files which have been added to existing sets.

PBasic

The following files can be found in the PBasic 2 set:

- **Golf10** - a golf game which uses pgc graphic screens of the holes
- **Scorecards** - two included, one for (real!) golf and one for general games
- **Du** - add ToDo lists to the diary
- **Eta** - gives estimated time of arrival when on a journey
- **Recipe** - scales recipes for different numbers of people
- **Roman** - translates Roman numerals eg CLV=155
- **Stair, csh10 and wsh10** - provides calculations for architects
- **Wtp700** - convert Wizard telephone files to Portfolio address files

Powerbasic

These new files are in the Powerbasic set:

- **Autodu** - for pilots to access DUAT via a modem
- **CPort** - prototype program for downloading messages from Compuserve
- **Portfax** - send faxes via Compuserve using Portcis (also on this set)
- **Timese** - set system time to an atomic clock via a modem.

Utilities

- **Chksum** - gives checksum for a file
- **Fast** - set Portfolio to fast mode eg from batch file
- **Fndadr** - search address files for a string from the command line
- **Lock & Unlock** - encrypt and decrypt files
- **Noclic** - disable keyclicks
- **Pct** - displays ascii character table
- **Sdl** - sorted directory lister
- **VDel** - selectively delete files

(These files are on Utilities 1)

- **Arcopy** - selective copy program which helps with back-ups
- **Tmw** - quickly list diary entries for any entered date

(These files are on Utilities 2)

PC Accessories 2

- Dryact - converts Portfolio dry files to Act! format
- DrySk - converts Portfolio dry files to Sidekick app files
- SKDry - converts Sidekick app to Portfolio dry format
- FixFT - Patch for FT.com, the PC file transfer program so that it will work with LPT2

NEW! - Update Set

In order to give the best value for money, we try to fit as many programs as possible onto each set. This means that we often add files to existing sets as they become available.

So that those of you who have already bought the sets do not miss out, we have introduced **Update Sets**. These will provide all the new programs in one set which will be available for the slightly cheaper price of £3:50 per set. All of the programs in this "New Additions" section are available in:

Set UP2 - Update 2

(See the catalogue for more details.)

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Portfolio Hints and Tips ✔

Security On The Portfolio

One of the great advantages of the Portfolio is its small size and portability, but this same benefit brings with it a disadvantage - it is easier to lose or for people to get their hands on. This can be a particular problem if you keep information on your Portfolio of a confidential nature.

So what can be done to keep your Portfolio, and the information on it, secure? Well, firstly, on a practical level, it is worth making sure that your Portfolio, all memory cards and peripherals have a label attached with your name, address and phone number on. Some people go a stage further and get a name and address plate fixed to the bottom of their machine. These simple procedures could easily save you a lot of worry, and money, if your cards or computer are lost.

Lost.com (Set GR3 - Graphics 3) is an animation of a sweating cartoon character with a message declaring "I'm Lost, please return me & you may qualify for a reward - see reward.txt", which can be placed in your autoexec.bat or other batch file. Reward.txt contains your name, return address and reward details. There are also a couple of other animations in this set to deter prying eyes and fingers.

Whilst not foolproof, **password programs** can deter unauthorised access to your Portfolio. There are three such programs available from *The Portfolio Connection*, the first (in Set UT1 - Utilities 1) has a fixed password and the second (in Set UT2 - Utilities 2) has a user-defined password. These may be put in your autoexec.bat file or run before you turn off the Port. When switched back on, the password must be entered before you can continue.

A short cut is to make a small batch file called, say, O.bat. For those who have not made a batch file, do the following: Open up your editor and type in these two lines:

```
Password sloop
Off
```

Save this file as O.bat. In the example above it is assumed your password program is password.com (or password.exe) and your password is "sloop" (One program does not require you to put in a password). When you want to turn off your machine, type in O and then enter, and the Portfolio will turn off after setting the password.

The third **Secure.exe** (Set UT1 - Utilities 1) is more comprehensive. You type your name, address and phone number into a file called secure.dat. When you type in Secure followed by enter, it will put this return screen on display and then turn off your machine. When you turn on, you are greeted by a "Please return to...." screen. You then need to enter a predefined password to access the machine. I have found this program very useful.

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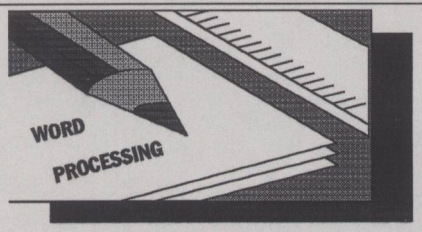

File Encryption

To continue the theme of security on the Portfolio, we will look at file encryption in the wordprocessing section of this issue.

The first method is to use editor hooks as mentioned last month. There are two, both on Set WD1 - Wordprocessing 1:

- **Code.hoo & Decode.hoo**
- **Ncrypt.hoo & Dcrypt.hoo**

Place these hooks in the root directory of your A drive (they MUST be here or they won't work!) .

Open up the editor and load or type the file to be encrypted.

Press Fn-6

Select code.hoo or ncrypt.hoo

Press enter. With ncrypt you will be prompted for a password.

Your document will now be scrambled and can be saved or left.

To decode repeat the process but choose decode.hoo or dcrypt.hoo and enter the password when prompted.

Code & Decode by Dave Stewart, provide a very simple form of coding but are enough to deter the casual onlooker if you leave your Portfolio with an open document for a brief period of time.

Ncrypt & Dcrypt are much tougher to crack, but the program sometimes has problems with the word wrap in the editor and blank lines in an adr file which has been loaded into the editor for encryption. The author, Don Messerli of Software Vineyard is working on this at the moment.

Outside the editor you can use **Des** (Set UT2 - Utilities 2) which provides a high, if slow, degree of file encryption. It comes with a batch file set up for an adr file called pwd.adr in which you place your confidential info. To operate you invoke the batch file by typing PW followed by your password, and enter. Des will decrypt the adr file so that you can work on it. When you leave the address book, it will encrypt the file and rename it to pwd.des.

Lock and **Unlock** (Set UT1 - Utilities 1) are a joy to use. They are small and fast. From the Dos command line type:

Lock my.txt locked.txt (+ enter)

where my.txt is the file to be encrypted and locked.txt is the name of the encrypted file. You will be prompted for a password. To decrypt type:

Unlock locked.txt my.txt (enter)

You will again be prompted for a password and, providing this is correct, the file will be decrypted

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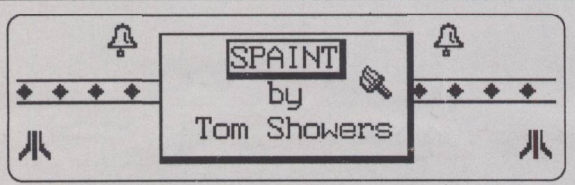


A Review of SPAINT

Portfolio Painting

Spaint, by Tom Showers, is a Paint program for the Portfolio (Set GR3 - Graphics 3). It has a very polished presentation for its small size, as the screenshot of the opening screen pictured above shows.

It has the following features:

- Access to commands by drop down menus or hotkeys.
- Help screens
- Draw, erase, line, box, circle and text modes. Erase whole screen also available.
- Loadable fonts - comes with two but additional fonts can be added. (10 such fonts are in Set GR4 - Graphics 4)
- Block copy, paste, load and save.
- Load pgf and pgc graphics, save in pgc format.
- The Esc key exits most features

Menus

After starting SPaint you are presented with a list box containing the names of the available fonts. After selecting one using the arrow keys and pressing enter you are presented with a blank screen except for the large arrow shaped cursor.

Pressing M accesses the drop down menus. Four headings are displayed across the top of your screen - File, tools, block and misc. The file menu is open initially. Items in the menu are selected using the up/down arrow keys. The other menus are selected using the left/right arrow keys. Most of the features are also accessible using single key hotkeys.

Modes

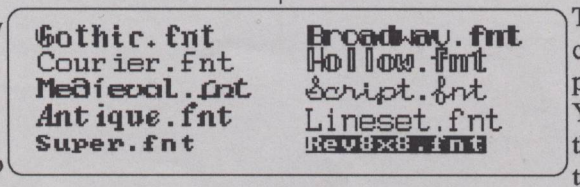
Back to our opening screen. You may at this point wish to load a picture. If so, you are presented with a list box in a similar manner for loading fonts.

When you access a mode a letter indicating the mode appears beside the cursor.

Draw - pressing d will access this mode and you are ready to go. The arrow keys will move you 8 pixels a time in the direction of the arrow. The embedded number pad keys 1-9 (except 5) will move 1 pixel in the particular direction.

Erase - accessed by pressing e. Works as for draw but erases instead. I found this very fiddly - lining up the cursor is tricky and pressing the arrow keys erases 1 pixel in every 8. An easier way is to enter text mode and use the space bar.

Line, Box & Circle - accessed by a, b and c respectively. Pressing enter anchors the first point and then use the direction keys to move the second point to where you want it. Pressing enter again fixes your line, box or circle.



Font Samples

Text - accessed by pressing t. You may then type in text in the available font. You can load different fonts and use them in the same picture if you wish.

My only criticism here is that if you make a mistake, backspace and delete do not work - in fact backspace draws a graphic character. It can then be quite difficult to realign the cursor so that your text is straight.

(continued on Page 4)

The PBasic Column

Introduction

PBasic, written by B J Gleason of the American University is an excellent BASIC interpreter specifically for the Portfolio. It takes up 43k of your memory card and needs about 67k of ram to run. In the next few issues we will be exploring some of its features in this column.

PBasic and the Port Editor

In many ways, PBasic is similar to GWBasic but whereas GWBasic has a built in editor, PBasic programs are developed using the Portfolio's built-in editor. The program even includes a small tsr, altr.com, which allows you to run a program you are working on from inside the editor. If you run PBasic without specifying a file, it will load the last file you used in the editor. In addition, if PBasic encounters an error in the program, it will load the built-in editor and point to the position of the error.

Command Line Switches

It has three command line switches : -t , -e and -p. T turns on the trace feature and E puts you into emulation mode if you are working with PBasic on a PC. Note, that this may lock up your PC unless emulation software is loaded. One way of avoiding this is to use the PBasic editor which will be discussed in a future issue. The P switch is useful, it invokes PBasic and then turns off the Portfolio, allowing you to change cards if your program is on a different memory card. More next issue..

Next Issue:

- More Portfolio Utilities
- Worksheet Review
- Address File Tips
- Games Corner
- The PBasic Column

Contributions

Send your news, views and other contributions to:

The Portfolio Connection Newsletter
Bucklands Cottage, Wallingford Rd
Cholsey Oxon OX10 9HB

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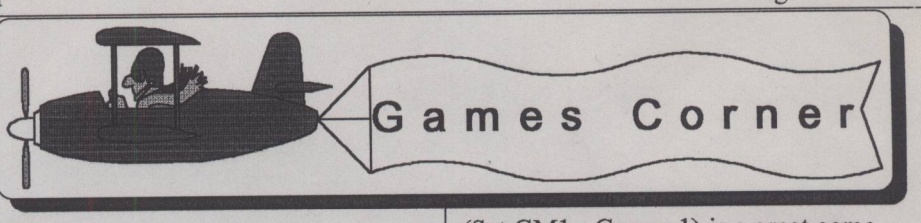
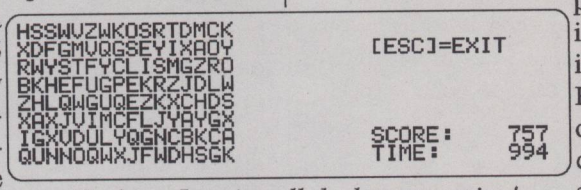


Findme

Findme, by Mike Becker, looks simple but is surprisingly difficult - and addictive. The program begins with an opening title screen followed by a brief description of how to play. On pressing a key, an 8x16 grid of rapidly changing letters is displayed. The object of the game is to find the one letter in this grid which is not moving. You then press that key on the keyboard. Sounds easy doesn't it? - but just wait until you try it!

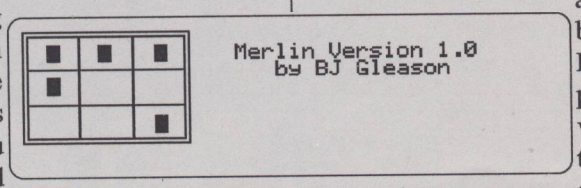


Findme - Imagine all the letters moving!

Whilst you are searching, a timer is counting down from 1000. The timer stops when you have found the letter and the displayed time is then added to your total score. You are then presented with a new grid. The game only ends if you run out of time or choose a wrong letter and this, I think, is what makes it so addictive - you are forever trying to reach the next 10,000 or improve on your last score. Findme (Set GM1 - Games 1) is a great game - small, well-written and entertaining.

Merlin

Nothing to do with magicians, except for making the blocks disappear, Merlin is an intriguing game by B J Gleason of the American University (Set GM1 - Games 1). The game consists of a 3x3 grid containing a number of blocks. The grid squares are numbered 1 to 9 counting up left to right from bottom left. Entering a number allows you to reverse a certain number of blocks. For example, pressing 1 reverses the bottom left four squares of the grid - all of these squares which contained a block become empty and vice versa. The object of the game is to get rid of all the blocks and it is easier to play than describe. Merlin is sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, but, unlike some games, never seems to lose its appeal.



A screenshot from Merlin - still a way to go

SPaint Cont.....

I have often found it easier to start again, but this can be pretty irritating if the mistake is near the end.

Block Commands

Blocks can be copied and pasted within a picture or saved and loaded as .spb files. Two spb files are included with SPaint. When copying a block, an 8x8 pixel box appears on screen. Pressing the 2, 3, or 4 number keys increases the size to 16x16, 24x24 or 32x32 pixels. Keying 1 returns the size to 8x8. When the box is over the picture element, press enter and the block is copied. This may then be saved or pasted elsewhere. When paste is selected, the cursor changes to the block, a nice touch, and can then be positioned exactly where you wish.

Summary

In general SPaint is a very professional and polished program, packing a lot of features into its small size.

It is lacking some useful features such as a block cut or erase facility and filled box and circle commands. It is my guess, however, that these features will be added later if there is sufficient support for the program.

All in all, this is a comprehensive drawing package for the Portfolio. SPaint is $5 shareware and may be found in Set GR3 - Graphics 3. Additional fonts and a pgc file of clipart are in Set GR4 - Graphics 4.

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